

December 2000

Oregon Trails-A look back at the official association with libraries, mentors, and colleagues from the twentieth century by Thomas Leonhardt

Thomas W. Leonhardt
Oregon Institute of Technology

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Leonhardt, Thomas W. (2000) "Oregon Trails-A look back at the official association with libraries, mentors, and colleagues from the twentieth century by Thomas Leonhardt," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 12: Iss. 6, Article 36.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3122>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Oregon Trails

by **Thomas W. Leonhardt** (Oregon Institute of Technology)

As I look back to my official associations with libraries, I find myself in the month of December and the year is 1969. I am finishing my senior year at Berkeley, the joint is hopping, and I am ready for a change. I didn't really mind my job as a cafeteria cashier and actually found it interesting to watch the people come through the line, regulars and visitors, and note what each had selected for lunch that day.

A fellow German-major, **Lynn Lewis**, and I, discovered that we both liked books, not just to read them but to own them. We had access to one of the great libraries in the world but still wanted certain titles for our own. One day that December 1969, she mentioned that there was an opening for a library page at the Rare Books and Special Collections Department (RBSC) and would I be interested. I was and she introduced me to **Leslie Clark**, one of the finest librarians and human beings I have ever known. If you believe in fate, my course in life was set although I didn't know it. All **Mrs. Clark** wanted to know, after determining that I could do the job, was how certain I was about continuing on at Berkeley as a graduate student. She didn't want to train me in December and have me leave in May.

Back then, the RBSC, located in the Doe Library, was not a part of the Bancroft Library (also in the Doe Library), although it became so administratively (under the late **James D. Hart** of the *Oxford Companion to American Literature* fame) a year or so later and then physically a few months before I graduated from Library School.

The RBSC had four rooms, each with a hallway door and each with interior doors so that one could walk from the administrative office to the exhibit room to the reading room to the Mark Twain room. **Mrs. Clark** shared the administrative room with a cataloger, a bibliographer, and a secretary.

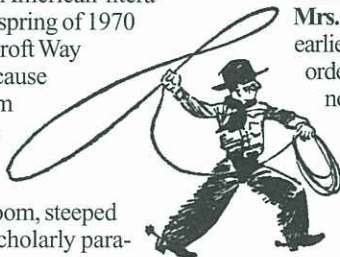
When I went to work there, the Mark Twain Room was still in use. They later moved to larger quarters in the Doe Library but I was still able to visit on occasion and see Mark Twain's silver cribbage board (I never got to play a game on it, alas) and his notebooks and manuscripts being edited for a scholarly collected edition. **Henry Nash Smith** had begun the project but was no longer involved. I took an American literature class from Smith in the spring of 1970 (we had to meet across Bancroft Way at a Presbyterian Church because of campus unrest), and am sorry that I did not have the chance to meet him in his editorial capacity. Nevertheless, it was a wonderful room, steeped in scholarly activities and scholarly para-

phernalia. When the Twain people moved out, the room became a work room where I spent many a happy hour working on the typography collection across from my colleague, **Michael Hackenberg**, who was just as happily engaged in a collection of French Revolution pamphlets.

The exhibit room was used for library school instruction and contained, in addition to shelves and cabinets of books, a hand press. I cannot remember what kind it was but it was regularly used by library school students, under the direction of the late **Roger Levenson**. The history of the book classes were taught by **Bob Harlan**, now retired, and Fred Mosher who died a few years ago. Those three, along with **Mrs. Clark**, were as fine an introduction to librarianship as could be hoped for. Wonderful people with a complete dedication to libraries, librarianship, the book, the history of the book, and to the whole apparatus of librarianship. By the turn of the century, all they stood for at Berkeley was gone.

I did stay at Berkeley after graduation (we didn't actually graduate in a ceremony because large public gatherings in May 1970 were not allowed), to do graduate work in German. While taking a **Hermann Hesse** seminar from **Joseph Mileck**, I was assigned to classify the Hesse collection housed in RBSC and accumulated through the efforts of **Professor Mileck**. **Mrs. Clark** adapted the LC schedule for **Hesse** to encompass everything we had -- manuscripts, first editions, private editions, microfilmed book reviews, hand-illustrated poems given to friends, collected works, translations, and works of authors who had been important to **Hesse's** development as a writer. That experience, coupled with my other work there, some involving the exhibits assembled for history of the book classes, led me to remark that I wished I were in library school instead of studying German. The simple reply of a friend was, "Well, why don't you go to library school?" So I did, finishing in May 1973 and going from there to Stanford as Gifts and Exchanges Librarian a month later.

Some of the things I remember from the 20th century, not so very long ago despite the passage of time, include electric erasers. The RBSC used the LC classification when I began work there but the collection had two other classifications, too, and it was **Mrs. Clark's** mission to reclassify the earlier schemes into LC. Rather than order new card sets, which would not have been sufficient anyway because of our special tracings for printer, place, illustrator, date of printing, we simply erased the old classification and typed in the new.



At Berkeley and at Stanford I also searched in the LC Depository catalogs for cards to match new acquisitions. OCLC was in its infancy and available only to Ohio libraries, but even they had to depend on the Library of Congress, either through the NUC (National Union Catalog) or depository card sets.

At Stanford, we were developing BALLOTS, an automated technical processing system that ran on a large IBM Mainframe time sharing system. The machine readable record would be keyed into the system using a dumb terminal and LC or other copy that would result in either purchase orders, claim forms, or catalog records.

I remember, too, from work at another library, what it was like to produce purchase orders on multi-form 3"x5" forms, parts of which would go to the vendor and other parts of which would go into the public card catalog, an order file (encumbrances), and a received file. Encumbrance and payment totals were run on 10-key adding machines that produced miles of paper tapes that had to be compared with the 3x5 slips from which the prices had been taken.

I remember revising the card catalog, too, with new entries filed above the rod. For those who wax nostalgic for the card catalog, I can only remind them that the mind is a powerful tool that is designed to delete actual pain from our memories without letting us forget the source of the pain. In 1997, I had occasion to consult at a library that was still using a card catalog. I am only glad that it was a small catalog and that I didn't have to log several miles while exercising my wrists, forearms, and biceps as I hauled drawer after drawer onto the pull-out shelves and back again.

Those early days really were the good old days, as I look back, because we had to understand filing rules and cataloging rules even if our jobs were not in the catalog department. We seemed closer to the activities that took place behind the scenes and closer to the people working back there. Authority work was not as advanced as today so we had to pay special attention to the form of an author's name, be it personal or corporate. I don't miss those tools, primitive yet sophisticated, too, but I miss the bookish associations that have been replaced by computers. Nevertheless, I appreciate the computerized tools of today, and not just because I have been using computers in libraries since 1973. I have watched them become more sophisticated and dependable. We used to find a response time of three minutes acceptable and could wait for days for our batch programs to reach the top of the queue. Now everything is real time and if it takes an image on the Web more than a second or two to load, we are cursing our lack of bandwidth.

Yes, I miss a lot from the 20th century but mostly I miss the mentors and colleagues from those days. So many have died and so many others have retired. They are not for-

continued on page 90

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214-3002; 716-829-2408) <pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu>

Web sites selected for broad appeal, depth of information, and ease of access. Sites are organized by broad subject area and are visited just prior to publication. Please let the editor know of any sites that are not accessible. Comments and suggestions welcome to Pamela M. Rose, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214-3002 716-829-2408 pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu.

Unless otherwise noted in square brackets following the description, Internet addresses were published in Science, NetWatch column edited by Jocelyn Kaiser.

Anthropology

Neanderthals and Modern Humans: A Regional Guide allows users to "share in the quest for knowledge" of how these two groups of people were related, how they may have interacted, and what became of Neanderthals. A map pinpointing various sites where discoveries were made (many not reported in the popular media) leads to summaries of information. Books, Serials, Museums, Centers, and Links relating to this topic are also provided.

<http://www.neanderthal-modern.com/>

Botany

Vascular plants, mosses, liverworts, hornworts, and lichens of the U.S. and its territories are the focus of the Plants Database maintained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Listings include names, checklists, automated tools, identification information, species abstracts, distributional data, crop information, plant symbols, plant growth data, plant materials information, plant links, references, and other plant information for botanists and hobbyists alike. Four major categories: Topics, Gallery, Links, and Tools provide access to searchable databases, erosion control models, downloadable plant taxonomies, and wonderful photographic images that may be used for non-commercial purposes if credit is given.

<http://plants.usda.gov/plants/index.html>

Music

Amino acid identities determining pitch? Protein folding patterns dictating instrumentation? Alpha-helix, beta-strands and turns represented by different instruments?

Welcome to Genetic Music! The music is composed algorithmically with Algorithmic Arts software using raw genetic data available on the Internet. Listen to excerpts of composed pieces available on CDs (three

have been produced so far). John Dunn (a "hard-core genetic composer" according to Science) and biologist Dr. Mary Anne Clark collaborate on pieces ranging from Alcohol Dehydrogenase to Spidroin. The page also links to a site with full tracks.

geneticmusic.com/dnamusic

Reference

BioMed Central has competition! The Scientific World, boasting a database of over 11 million article titles and e-mail alerts to new articles from over 20,000 journals titles, also intends to publish papers for free. The venture aims to profit from full-text downloads at \$12 and up plus copyright fees. Chief Graham Lees has garnered \$8 million and prominent scientists as advisers, but only the

future will determine whether scientists will send him their manuscripts.

<http://www.thescientificworld.com/>


This extensive on-line encyclopedia of math and science, compiled by Web encyclopedist Eric W. Weisstein, curiously includes a link to plot summaries for every single episode of the original Star Trek series! Treasure Troves is divided into broad categories: Astronomy, Biography, Chemistry, Life Cellular Automaton (which includes terms such as "Methuselah" — Any small "seed" pattern in Life that does not stabilize for a very long time), Mathematics, Music, and Physics. There's also a scientific book list, and a straight alphabetical interface for all listed terms.

www.treasure-troves.com 

Oregon Trails from page 92

gotten. I remember **Ralph Hansen**, **Fred Lynden**, **Bill Allan**, **David Weber** from Stanford, all important in my career and all but one retired. And at ALA there were such wonderful colleagues in the old RTSD who have also retired. **Jean Boyer Hamlin**, **John Kaiser**, **Noreen Alldredge**, **Marcia Tuttle**, **Bill Schenck**, and others who should forgive me for not naming them. And bookseller friends like **Fred Gullette**, **Jim Cameron**, and **Don Coombs**, to name

but three, who patiently and enthusiastically explained how the book business worked.

And the best of the 21st century will be the friends and colleagues who are still around and still the main reason I attend the annual conferences and midwinter meetings of the **American Library Association**. The machine has not replaced the people who make the world of librarianship and books such a wonderful place to work and play in. Having said that, though, I do wonder what it would be like to retire and I wonder if I will, in turn, become part of someone else's list and remembered fondly. 

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

41 ABC CLIO	15 BOWKER	23 INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS
63 ABC CLIO	87 CAPITAL UNIV. LAW LIBRARY	95 KLUWER ACADEMIC
49 ABSOLUTE BACKORDER	79 CASALINI LIBRI	81 MAJORS
29 ACM	31 CATCHWORD	83 MARTINUS NIJHOFF INTL.
47 ACS	87 THE CHARLESTON ADVISOR	75 MCFARLAND
2 ALFRED JAEGER	10 THE CHARLESTON REPORT	96 MIDWEST LIBRARY SERVICE
9 ALIBRIS	73 CHOICE	11 NETLIBRARY
77 ALPER, JERRY	67 COUTTS	89 NISO
51 AM. INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS	21 EASTERN BOOK COMPANY	61 RITTENHOUSE
59 ASME INTERNATIONAL	25 EBSCO INFORMATION SERV.	65 SAGE PUBLICATIONS
5 ATG	33 ELSEVIER	14 SCHOENHOF'S FOREIGN BOOKS
18 AUX AMATEURS DE LIVRES	35 ELSEVIER	39 M. E. SHARPE
91 BASCH SUBSCRIPTIONS, INC.	37 ELSEVIER	13 SWETS BLACKWELL
19 BELL & HOWELL	57 EMERY PRATT	71 WALTER DE GRUYTER, INC.
69 BERNAN	85 ERASMUS	26 WILEY
3 BLACKWELL'S BOOK SERVICES	17 FAXON, ROWECOM	27 WILEY
45 BOOK HOUSE	53 GROVE'S DICTIONARIES	43 YBP
7 BOWKER	55 IEEE	

Ad Manager: Edna Laughrey Internet: elaughrey@aol.com
phone: 734-429-1029; fax: 734-429-1711